Ufford PUNCH

Issue 335

December 2024

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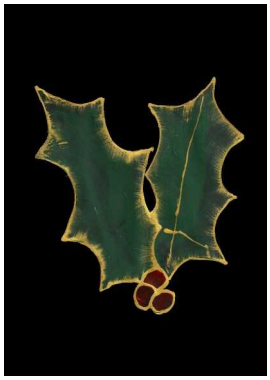
Cover by Florence Jones (see page 7)

Welcome to the Ufford PUNCH

From the Editor

A big festive greeting to you all as we begin the run-up to the Christmas holiday season during which many familiar faces will be returning to the village from adventures afar. It is always good to see friends and family and we at the PUNCH hope you get all your head and heart desires.



The last edition of 2024 is a bumper one showcasing the people, events and places that make Ufford so unique. Firstly, thank you to all those who have sent in Christmas card greetings to be published and have donated £10 to charity. This year we are supporting the Lighthouse Women's Aid, a charitable organisation based in Ipswich, providing emotional support to women, young people and children affected by domestic abuse.

A personal view, but I believe the PUNCH has gone from strength-to-strength this year and I would just like to thank all those volunteers who give up their time to ensure it comes out and is delivered promptly on the 1st of each month. This includes the editorial team, the delivery squad and writers who submit copy on their own clubs or institutions. And, of course, the advertisers whose continued support allows the PUNCH to be produced at no cost to the reader. Make sure they know you have contacted them after reading the magazine.

The stunning front page has been designed and painted by 10-year-old Flo Jones, of Lower Road, Ufford, who attends Eyke Primary School and has designs on being well.... a designer. She traced the outline of the tree and then hand painted it in gold paint - which took her two weekends of hard work. Her brother Monty, seven, has his own holly and berry design on this page and the two other Christmas cards are drawn by children at Melton Primary School. Many thanks to them.

There is a veritable smorgasbord of stories this month: the floods are remembered one year on (page 9), we speak to villagers who tuck into their turkey early when they celebrate Thanksgiving, which in Ufford is a reminder of our links to the thousands of US air force personnel who made Suffolk their home in the recent past (pages 16 and 17), and there is a special behind-the-scenes report on the White Lion Bonfire Night (page 21) ... and much more.

I had the pleasure of editing the Christmas 2023 edition and that seems like a blink of the eye ago. It is a reminder to enjoy every minute and to try and see the positive in all we do. As the mighty pop band Slade would sing:

"So here it is, Merry Christmas."

Andy Gardner

NOTE EARLY DEADLINE!

The January Ufford PUNCH submissions should be sent to submissions@uffordpunch.org.uk by **Friday 6th December**

Have You Heard It on the PUNCHLine?

Get the latest village news first via our digital newsletter '**PUNCHLine**'.
If there is anything you want to broadcast, write your message and send it in Monday - Saturday for circulation to all our subscribers as soon as possible.
To subscribe, or broadcast news, email punchline@uffordpunch.org.uk

UFFORD PUNCH NOTICE BOARD

THE UFFORD DIARY DATES ARE ON PAGE 25

Get Ready for the 2025 White Lion New Year's Day Treasure Hunt- With an I'm a Celebrity Twist

The winners of the 2024 White Lion New Year walk and quiz have been very busy preparing the 2025 version - and they promise it will include a couple of very special innovations.

'Go Ballistic' featuring Julie and Lee Murray and friends Richard and Sarah Dempsey have been working on the quiz since the summer in the hope it will attract a record attendance. Julie told the PUNCH: "We are looking to introduce a few new elements this year such as 'Christmas Gin' that should spice it up a little bit.

"In addition to the usual walk around our beautiful village we will be introducing a couple of stops along the way with the chance to earn a festive drink as well as points for the quiz.

"The Ufford Post (Andy and Amanda's house) is the village version of Kiosk Keith from I'm a Celebrity... Get Me Out of Here! Get the question right and you will be rewarded. Get it wrong and you will be told to Uff-Off.

"The second stop will be at Lazy Acres (Julie and Lee's house), off the High Street, where you will receive a similar welcome. Visual rounds and New Year trivia will be the theme.

The White Lion has bacon butties and drinks available from 10am before the hunt starts at 10:30am. Cost is £10. There will be bangers and mash with seasonal vegetables for lunch (and a veggie option) at £15. Please book with the White Lion on 01394 160770 if you wish to eat.

Body of Man Found at Ufford "Swimming Hole" in the River Deben

Police were called shortly after 9am on Tuesday November 5th to reports that a man had been found dead in the "swimming hole" in the River Deben at Ufford. Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service and the East of England Ambulance Service also attended.

While the body hasn't yet been formally identified, he is believed to be a man in his 50s. His next of kin have been notified and a file will be prepared for the coroner in due course. The death is being treated as unexplained at this time but police do not believe there are any suspicious circumstances.

A spokesperson for Suffolk Police said: "A man's body was found at Ufford Hole at 9am on 5th November. There were no suspicious circumstances."

The body was recovered by Suffolk Coastguard in accordance with normal procedure.

Photo by Kit Thomas

MELTON PRIMARY SCHOOL GOVERNOR VACANCIES

Melton Primary School is seeking to appoint two new governors who are good at listening, asking questions and have time to support the work of the Governing Board.

Governors provide leadership, support and challenge to the Headteacher and senior staff by offering advice on a range of matters. They share the common goal of seeking to make the school the best it can be.

The post is suitable for people who can offer time to attend meetings and to visit the school to support events. Those appointed can expect a commitment of between 15 and 20 hours across the school year.

If you are interested in applying, please email the school outlining the skills, qualities and experience you offer. ***Or,*** *for an informal conversation with the Chair of Governors, please email or telephone using the contact details below.*

We look forward to hearing from you.

Contact details:

admin@melton.suffolk.sch.uk

01394 382506

Melton Primary School

Ufford Parish Council News

Season's Greetings

Ufford Parish Council would like to wish all residents and their families a very Merry (and healthy!) Christmas and a Peaceful New Year.

Update on the Neighbourhood Plan

At their meeting on 15th October, Ufford Parish Council unanimously resolved to forward their draft Neighbourhood Plan to East Suffolk Council for the next phase in its journey. ESC will now scrutinise it and, when they are ready, they will hold a second consultation on the contents. Following this consultation, the Plan will go to an independent inspector for examination. We hope this will happen in January or February 2025.

This journey is far from over, however we would like to thank the people who have helped us reach this stage: Members of the Steering Group (both past and present), 'Foot Soldiers' who helped to deliver questionnaires, flyers and other items related to the project, and anyone who has taken the time to answer questions or attend events to give your view. Our consultants have indicated that response from Ufford residents has been amongst the highest they have ever seen; thank you.

Planning Matters

As part of the Parish Council's continual efforts to protect the village from unwanted development, both within the parish boundary and outside it, we have recently undertaken the following steps:

We have signed up to the East Suffolk Communities Energy Partnership. This is a group of an ever growing number of towns and villages who are concerned at the impact numerous National Energy projects are having on the Suffolk Countryside. Efforts are being made to engage with the Secretary of State.

We have written to ESC in support of a resident of Pettistree to request that the Petistree/Loudham Solar Farm Application, which was permitted but then overturned at Judicial Review, is resubmitted. We feel that the original application had been altered too many times and a new application is now required.

We continue to work with ESC Enforcement Team to ensure that a heritage flint wall on the High Street is restored, following demolition during building works. Many thanks to the local residents who alerted us to this incident as soon as it had happened.

Ufford is represented on the Sizewell C Southern Transport Forum where SZC senior management meet regularly with local parishes to discuss their plans and to hear about issues which concern residents. Although the full financial agreement for SZC is not yet in place, enabling highways works are already underway or will start in 2025. We will continue to raise concerns about HGV and contractor traffic volumes and the impact of major works on the rail network.

If you know of a planning matter that needs investigating, please contact the Clerk at ufford.pc@hotmail.com.

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You're Our Deer Wonky. A Muntjac with Deformed Legs Has Adopted An Ufford Family

A Muntjac deer with a birth defect that means he has deformed front legs has adopted an Ufford family who have named the real-life Bambi 'Wonky' in celebration of his indomitable spirit. The small, stocky deer - about the same size as a medium dog - was first sighted by Julie and Lee Murray when they moved into their home Lazy Acres, off the High Street, Ufford, eight years ago.

Julie, who lives with Lee and daughters Alex, 21, who works behind the bar at the White Lion pub and her sister Beth, 18, tells the heartwarming tale of how Wonky has become part of the family - whilst still being wild at heart.

"Wonky is now a much loved member of the Murray family. We think he has always lived in the hedges and bushes and wood behind the house before the house was built.

"The first time we saw him was not long after we moved into Lazy Acres, when our dog Elsie startled him and he ran in the bush. He was on three legs then so we think he may have been born with a deformed leg.

"He was always shy and ran away if he saw us but since this summer he has got tamer and tamer. He now walks on his 'knees' on both front legs so we're not sure what happened to injure his second front leg.

"His hooves had grown very long looking like twigs as he has never been able to wear them down through walking. As he has got to trust us more he loves being stroked and a good scratch. He leans in for more like a dog does.

"So I decided to see if he would let me trim the hooves and he didn't move at all while I did it with my secateurs. It must be more comfortable to lie down without the hooves sticking in.

"We're not sure why he has become tamer this year, probably because he finds it harder to find food for himself. He now relies on us and is waiting by the kitchen gate every morning and tea time to be fed. He will also come round to the patio window if he sees us in the lounge and fancies a snack.

"It's like having a giant Guinea pig. We give him fruit and vegetables and also rabbit or Guinea pig pellets. He eats a lot so now Melton Produce kindly donate fruit and vegetables that they wouldn't sell.

"As you can see from the photo this often looks like a harvest festival and we are very grateful for the donations. The kind staff in the shop explained that they have to pay to have the wasted fruit and vegetables taken away so Wonky also does them a favour reducing cost as well as food waste.

"We also collect apples and sweet-chestnuts or whatever is available when we are walking around the village so he gets what he would naturally eat.

"Wonky is looking forward to Christmas and we're aiming to teach him to fly for the big night, as you don't need legs to fly. So check the skies to see if you can spot him."

Photos by Julie and Lee Murray, Words by Julie Murray

Flo Jo Is Our Front Cover Superstar

Florence Jones hopes that her festive gold Christmas tree front cover will make villagers happy and give them "lots of Christmas spirit." The 10-year-old Year-6 student at Eyke Primary School designed and painted the eye-catching December cover in just two weekends. She started with a traditional watercolour of a Christmas tree and then was hit by a moment of inspiration.

Flo, as she is known, who lives with parents Mike and Helen and younger brother Monty, seven, decided to use a gold paint pencil. She sketched out the outline of a tree using a pencil and painted over the lines with the gold paint. Flo dotted red and green bubbles in the tree for a splash of festive colour.

She said: "I am really happy with the painting. I hope that when people see it that they will be happy and think it's really cool and really good. I just want everyone to feel happy and get lots of Christmas spirit."

Flo, who lives in Lower Road, Ufford, also helped brother Monty with his holly and berries painting. It is reproduced on the editorial page. The youngster is now planning her list for Santa which includes a pair of slippers and a home Bubble Tea making kit.

She says her favourite lessons are English, DT and, of course, Art. Perhaps the December issue will be the first of many front pages.

Mum Helen said: "Flo loves drawing and painting and it's amazing for her to have the PUNCH front cover."

Andy Gardner

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2024
Christmas at the White Lion

Festive greetings from the White Lion Team

Quiz Night - Tuesday 10th December - Meal 7pm , Quiz 8pm
Christmas Quiz Night - Tuesday 17th December - Meal 7pm , Quiz 8pm
Christmas Open Mic Night - Wednesday 18th December - 7pm
New Years Eve 80s Party - Join us to celebrate the New Year with 80s music and menu. Please book early.
New Years Day Walk Treasure Hunt - Set by last year's winners *Go Ballistic.*
Starting 10.30am with bacon butties and coffee, two festive drink stops on the way, walk back to the pub for bangers and mash. Please book early.

Christmas Menu available up to Christmas Eve, see website for details. Bookings only.

Opening Times for Christmas and New Year
Christmas Eve - 12 noon - 10.30pm **Christmas Day - Drinks only 12 noon - 2.30pm**
Boxing Day - 12 noon - 9pm
New Years Eve - 12 noon - 4pm (80's Party in evening) **New Years Day - 10.30am - 5pm**

For additional information or to book a table or an event contact
Andy on 07538 600986 or 01394 460770 info@uffordwhitelion.co.uk

stephen_thurlow@hotmail.com Please reserve a table to avoid disappointment 01394 460770
Please check our website for details of our events: www.uffordwhitelion.co.uk

One Year On From the Floods of 2023
Marvyn and Sarah Godfrey Live in a Tent .... and They Love It.

A little more than one year since they were flooded out of their bungalow, Marvyn and Sarah Godfrey are living in a tent in their garden whilst the property is refurbished ... and they couldn't be more happy. The couple, who have rented the house since 2019, were at the epicentre of the surge of water along Byng Brook that overflowed after the deluge from Storm Babet over five days from the 16th October 2023. Their home Bridge Bungalow, was one of five properties along the High Street severely damaged by the flooding, during a winter that saw the region swept by a number of notable gales, including Storm Henk, which hit the village over the festive period.

Heading towards Christmas 2024, Marvyn and Sarah, a teaching assistant, face the prospect of having their turkey under canvas, in budget Yurt-style tent that Marvyn bought costing less than £500. The marine engineer, who is recovering after a full hip replacement in October, erected the tent just before the surgery and kitted it out with mains electricity, an adjoining ex-military tent and small NATO wood stove, a TV, storage, double bed and even rugs.

Marvyn, 49, explained that the decision to go wild camping in their own back garden was partly taken to save money, mostly driven by the impracticalities of having four cats in the family, but had also been influenced by his childhood spent in the fields of Suffolk. He said: "I grew up wild camping and love being outside. I'm a country boy and it seemed a logical idea to live in a tent whilst the bungalow was being refurbished. It also saved money."

Sarah, 49, said that she was initially sceptical about living under the stars as the winter approached but has changed her mind after weeks listening to the owls hoot outside. She said: "When I came back one day and the tent was up I was a bit taken aback. I didn't know what to expect, but I am loving the experience of getting closer to nature. It will be hard to go back inside."

The bungalow was flooded by up to eight inches of water after the brook, which flows alongside the property, overflowed after being blocked with debris washed down from higher up its course. The water damage caused mould throughout the house and builders have been working to remove and restore the property for nine weeks. It is hoped they will be back for Christmas, but the couple are philosophical if they miss the deadline.

Marvyn said: "I have loved living in the tent. It is a reminder of the simpler life and I really wouldn't mind Christmas Day under canvas. We have a BBQ and can spatchcock a small turkey, chicken or goose on the woodburner." Sarah explained the on-going work: "A concrete floor throughout the property has been poured and is currently drying, though slower than hoped. It looks like the floor coverings are someway off, as is the plastering, paintwork and plumbing."

Sarah said the couple's four cats - Oreo, Tigre, Morgan, and Grimalkin (it's old English for witch) - "are very happy with us living in the garden with them."

But what about the fear of another Storm Babet? Sarah said: "Thankfully, the camp has held up to strong winds and heavy downpours, but should it succumb to the elements at 3am, we are lucky to have a small caravan as a backup plan. Thank you to Andy Jarrett (landlord at the White Lion) for lending us his mum's caravan."

If the couple are still in the tent at Christmas, they promise it will be decorated with lights and a tree.

Andy Gardner

[Ed.Note: Of the five properties damaged during the flooding, most have been repaired, though there are some final works to be completed before Christmas.]

A positive consequence of Storm Babet is the emergence of an Ufford Parish Council Emergency Plan that will be launched in 2025. A group of five residents and councillors - the Community Emergency Planning Group (CEPG) - have coordinated the work and are putting the final touches to the plan.

It will give Ufford Parish Council (UPC) and all residents a clear understanding of the risks and resources in the area.

The CEPG has liaised closely with the Suffolk Joint Emergency Planning Unit and other local groups during the process.

Its objectives include understanding "our local risks/hazards" to consider "possible mitigation for the risks/hazards identified" and to "assist residents in being prepared for emergencies."

An Emergency Preparedness Guide, including flooding, will be circulated, in particular to households at risk, detailing steps they can take in preparation for possible flooding including:

* Checking whether your property is within a flood risk area (gov.uk/check-longterm-flood-risk)
* Signing up for the Environment Agency's free flood warning service(gov.uk/sign-up-for-flood-warnings)
* Having sufficient insurance for your property.

The plan is now in its final draft form awaiting approval before being put before the full Ufford Parish Council.

So Here It Is Merry Christmas … at The Ufford Crown

Tony Hill spoke to Polly Durrant about the military-style operation behind a great festive season and learns it all begins in July!

"I was always on the look out for a Father Christmas. I once picked one up in a warehouse! He had a wonderful white beard … luckily for me it turned out he was a professional Santa." Polly Durrant, proprietor of the Ufford Crown and ex-Santa talent spotter.

The pub no longer host an evening with Santa, but the daunting task of preparing the Ufford Crown for the busiest time of the year starts unbelievably in July and by August the Crown will often have ten to fifteen bookings for Christmas parties.

"I absolutely love Christmas and it's traditions. I'll be here on the 25th November decorating the pub, I always look forward to that day and making it look a little different each year. I have to thank our neighbours Cathy and James Mutton who always help in putting up our Christmas trees out front. Our first day of Christmas 2024 will be the 27th November and by the final serving on the 31st December, we will all be on our last legs! It is a huge team effort and I am very grateful to have such a supportive family and staff."

The Crown Christmas Shopping List

1,200 Christmas Crackers
Norfolk turkey for 700
200 Christmas puddings
10 bags of potatoes per week
7 Christmas trees
Ingredients for 500 glasses of mulled wine

Polly and Max are now into their thirteenth year at the pub. A focal point of their Christmas celebrations will be taking place this year on the 22nd December - the Carol Evening. *"It is such a great evening for us at the Crown, we don our dodgy Christmas jumpers and start early with our staff Secret Santa presents. We then close half the pub to invite all those that wish to join us for the carols. Over the years with Nick Apperley and David Berridge leading the carols, even the most timid of singers have managed to join in and get into the festive spirit! We always have a superb raffle and look to raise money for a charity close to our hearts. We shall again be supporting Nick and his amazing fundraising work for his three MND Charities."*

"Christmas Day drinks will be served from 12 noon to 2pm and we look forward to seeing many of you then." The pub will then close for some family time. In years gone by Polly has very kindly been hosted by various family members, but this year she will be cooking and hosting at home. So what are you having Polly?

"To be honest I've got no idea, do you think I've got time to think about that at the moment?!"

Executive Chef Will Hardiman it would be fair to say is not quite as enthusiastic as his sister Polly when it comes to the onset of Christmas. Then again, with the huge task of organising and making the festive menu from cranberry sauce to the nut roast, nearly every day for a month, one might understand it.

The nut roast is a study in Will's development of a course. Such is the duty of care in regard to allergies these days that the nut roast has been refined over the years and it is now a gluten and dairy free vegan menu staple … that has it's own special smart oven.

Will has a team of three or four (depending on the day's volume) helping him through the Christmas period. A special mention must go out to Head KP (Kitchen Porter) George who hand-peels up to ten sacks of potatoes in a week amongst his other tasks!

One item that Will does not have to worry about making himself is the Christmas pudding. The 200 that are on the Christmas shopping list come from Sue Allen in Thorpeness, Max's godmother.

No Turkeys Invited - the Staff Christmas Party

In early January the team settle in for an evening of relaxation with hotdogs or pizza, fancy dress, music and cocktails and not a sign of turkey or Christmas pudding.

Christmas Party 2016
Darcy and Margot Durrant

Christmas 2023
Carol Evening Raffle

Afternoon Delight Thanks to the Love to Sing Choir

St Mary's Church was filled on Saturday 26th October for the "Chalk and Cheese" Concert by the 35-voice Love to Sing Choir. The choir included three Ufford residents, John Mann, and Ros and Adrian Smith, to whom thanks are due for much of the organisation of the event. Over a hundred tickets went - a sellout!

The entertaining afternoon raised £1,460 for Parkinsons UK plus a donation to St Mary's Church. The Musical Director Rachael Tecklenberg and Accompanist Roy Everett took us through an eclectic repertoire, with music from a choral Latin Psalm, Country & Western, Sting, Folksongs, Spiritual, Pop and Broadway to mention just a few! Kipling's *The Glory of the Garden* was read followed by an arrangement of John Rutter's *For the Beauty of the Earth*. The audience was assaulted with a shrill train whistle *(Chattanooga Choo Choo)* and pelted with foam dice *(Luck Be a Lady)*, then encouraged to singalong to *Those Were the Days*! A highlight was the choir reading of a poem written by choir member Dr Anthony Bynom entitled *D.E.A.D. – Dutch Elm Ash Dieback*.

In keeping with the event's purpose, Beth Candle, Parkinsons UK Fundraiser, East Anglia, thoughtfully explained the characteristics of the disease and the need for research funding.

Following the concert the audience and choir enjoyed cheese and wine in the Church Hall. A very plentiful and wide selection of cheese was kindly donated by E W Revett & Sons, Wickham Market, and superior wine generously donated by an anonymous local sponsor. This was a pleasant opportunity for attendees to meet the choir members.

Director Rachael later told us "We had fun and games trying to squeeze everyone in and get the balance right. We're really pleased with how well the concert was received, and really thankful to the wonderful community spirit in Ufford for supporting the event and being such terrific hosts. We look forward to another joint venture at some date in the future."

The next Love to Sing event is the Christmas concert at Woodbridge Community Hall with the Excelsior Brass band, 14th December at 7pm, entry free.

Edward Creswick

THE UFFORD CROWN

CHRISTMAS AT THE UFFORD CROWN

PLEASE JOIN US FOR CHRISTMAS CAROLS

Sunday 22nd December 6.30pm

A fun and festive evening with warm sausage rolls, mince pies, mulled wine and the Ufford Christmas Raffle, raising funds for Nick Apperley's MND Charities

Christmas Eve - Open for Lunch and Dinner

25th December - Christmas Day Drinks 12 noon - 2pm

26th December - Boxing Day - Closed

New Years Eve - Open for Lunch and Dinner (close at 10:30pm)

New Years Day - Open for Lunch 12 noon to 3pm

We wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy 2025
Polly, Max, Will, Jess and the Team xx

The Ufford Crown, High Street, Ufford, IP13 6EL. Tel: 01394 461030

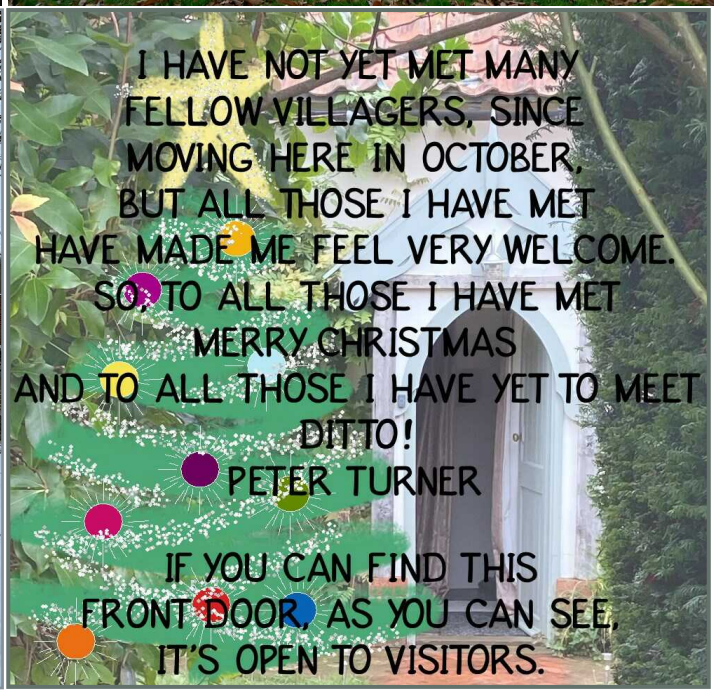
Happy Christmas
to all in Ufford !
Jakes Davies

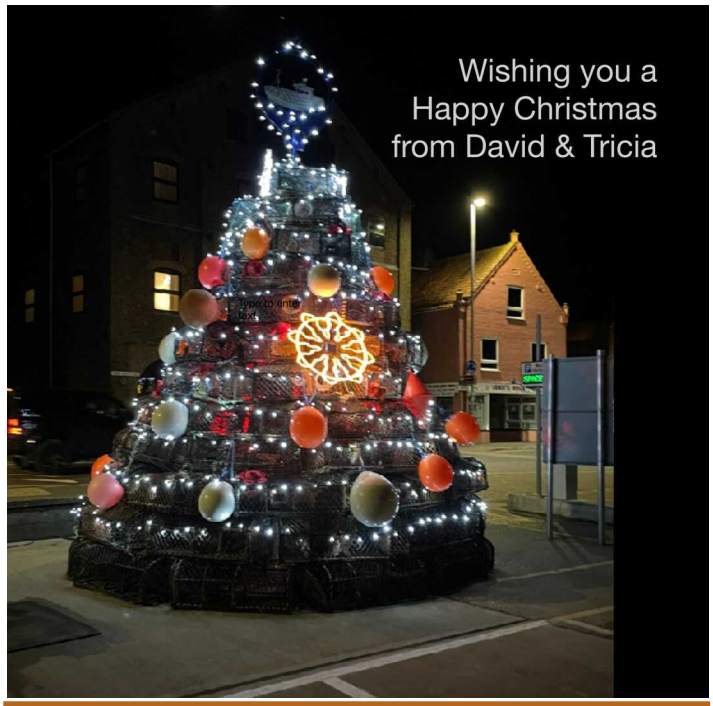
Happy Christmas from Ros Adrian
Tabsca & Bisto

Good wishes, peace and love to all in Ufford
from Adam, Tig and Kit Thomas

Very best wishes for a Merry Christmas
and a Happy New Year
from Mead Lodge
Sheila and Edward

Season's Best to friends
and neighbours
Alan & Jo


I HAVE NOT YET MET MANY
FELLOW VILLAGERS, SINCE
MOVING HERE IN OCTOBER,
BUT ALL THOSE I HAVE MET
HAVE MADE ME FEEL VERY WELCOME.
SO, TO ALL THOSE I HAVE MET
MERRY CHRISTMAS
AND TO ALL THOSE I HAVE YET TO MEET
DITTO!
PETER TURNER
IF YOU CAN FIND THIS
FRONT DOOR, AS YOU CAN SEE,
IT'S OPEN TO VISITORS.



WISHING YOU ALL A MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A PEACEFUL NEW YEAR FROM ST. MARY'S CHURCH PCC

Come and celebrate Christmas at St. Mary's Ufford:

Carol Service – 8th December @ 6:30pm
Christingle– 24th December @ 2:30pm
(with collection for The Children's Society)
Christmas Day Service – 25th December @ 10:00am

The Ufford PUNCH Committee wish to thank our advertisers, contributors and deliverers for their valuable support over the past year. We wish them and all our readers a very Happy Christmas and a Peaceful New Year.

MERRY CHRISTMAS TO OUR FRIENDS AND
NEIGHBOURS IN UFFORD FROM
THE HILLS AT LONG REACH

Wishing Everyone in Ufford
a Joyful Christmas
&
Peaceful New Year
Jane & Peter Cochrane

WISHING EVERYONE IN UFFORD A SMILING
MERRY CHRISTMAS JOHN SKINNER

CHEERS!
from Andy
and Amanda
Ooooh Aaaah it's Christmas.....

Merry Christmas to all
our Ufford friends
from Erica and Rob

WISHING EVERYONE A VERY
MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY, HEALTHY
AND PEACEFUL NEW YEAR, FROM DAWN AND
STEVE AT COPPERSWOOD, UFFORD PLACE.

Wishing everyone a very Happy Christmas from all at Yew Cottage

We wish you a Murray Christmas and a Wonky New Year

Merry Christmas, Ufford!
With love from
Douglas and Helen xx

Merry Christmas and Happy Motoring From all at KPM

Happy Christmas with love Jenny and Poppy

Happy Christmas from Pauline and all her Grandchildren

You'll Be Properly Stuffed If You Cele

Some Uffordians get their first taste of turkey a few weeks before the rest of us b day on the 28th November is enjoyed by a surprising number of villagers with linl means to them and how it is different - and similar - to Christmas Day. And, for o

I'm Not Feeling Particularly Celebratory about America at the Moment, But I'll Do My Best

Kevin and Shou-Wen Entertain Friends for Thanksgiving in Brooklyn, New York

On my first Thanksgiving Day in New York, having no idea what a big deal it was, I went into work to rack up some extra overtime and was astonished to find downtown Manhattan was a ghost town. Only one Asian deli was open, where I bought a frozen turkey pie to celebrate. It wasn't an auspicious start, but fortunately things improved in subsequent years and I gradually learned to enjoy and appreciate Thanksgiving.

Celebrated on the fourth Thursday of November, it may seem like the unnecessarily duplication of a turkey dinner immediately before Christmas, but the two holidays really complement each other. Christmas is a more intimate holiday. Thanksgiving brings in a bigger crowd, including distant relatives and various strays and hangers-on. The days before and after Thanksgiving are the busiest travel days of the year. There's no theology and no gifts to worry about. An inflatable cartoon dog leads a parade down Fifth Avenue, and then everyone does some serious eating. You meet people from different parts of the country who bring weird opinions and strange side dishes, like sweet potatoes with marshmallow or carrots with maple syrup (mostly these are old family recipes which use a lot of canned ingredients and have been handed down and hated for generations). Maybe someone tries to start a serious discussion - does the holiday mark the sad end of an indigenous culture or the beginnings of the Greatest Nation on Earth?

Sorry, I'm too full to argue.

Kevin Young

Born in the USA: From Washington to Ufford via Colorado

Neena and parents, Colorado 1975

Being born in Washington DC to an American father and living the first seven years of my life in the United States, means Thanksgiving is in my bones: Tables laden with delicious, American-palette-centric food have always been a tradition in my life.

My Mum who was English to the core still embraced it with gusto. She'd cook up a storm for us (and the many friends and family who gathered year-on-year). Dishes included the usual suspects that would then often turn-up again on Christmas day - Turkey, Cranberry Sauce, Stuffing, Collard Greens…. But then there were the Thanksgiving-only parts. In our family these included: twice-baked potatoes, sweet-potato casserole, and pumpkin or pecan pie (always go pecan I say).

The sweet potato casserole was, and still is, a strange favourite of mine: brimming with raisins and marshmallows (I know, weird right?) it would also make an appearance on my birthday which falls on Boxing Day. I'm sharing the recipe in the sidebar in case you fancy giving it a go – you should, trust me!

Christmas and my birthday have always had a more central place in my family's traditions and heart. But I'm very fond of Thanksgiving, especially the part when we have all eaten full-heartedly and then take turns to share something or someone we want to 'give thanks for'. It sounds schmaltzy, I know, but it is actually a real joy (and a very different kind of gift-giving than that arriving a month later).

In recent years, we've had some lovely gatherings of the Americans and American-adjacent folks who live nearby or who are visiting: Our family, Dan & Jo, Shou Wen & Kevin, Robyn & Richard are the usual suspects. We all cook our favourite family dishes, gather at one of our houses and sit down to share a veritable feast. Then my favourite part of 'giving thanks' ensues - which you should try...along with the sweet-potato casserole.

Neena Atkinson

Neena's Sweet Potato Pie Recipe

Ingredients:

- Sweet potatoes
- Salted Butter
- Brown sugar
- Pecans
- Raisins
- Cinnamon
- Mini marshmallows

Instructions:

You can freestyle quantities and ratios according to taste. The marshmallows ensure this is super sweet so I tend to hold back on the sugar. But whatever your taste, go for it.

Boil or bake sweet potatoes (baking is better flavour I think). Now mash them using good amount of salted butter. Add brown sugar, pecans, raisins and cinnamon (according to your taste). Mix it all up. Put your mixture in a baking dish. Top with mini marshmallows. I know it's radical and weird but trust me.... Bake in an oven at 180°C for 30-40minutes. Keep an eye on it so the marshmallows brown but don't burn. Enjoy!

ebrate Thanksgiving and Christmas in Ufford

**by celebrating Thanksgiving. America's great holi-
ks to the States. We asked some to explain what it
ne, it even brings back memories of first love.....**

Image created by Photoshop and AI

Thanksgiving: Love is in the Air

Daniel, age eight

My favourite Thanksgiving dish: Wendell's butternut squash soup, circa 2001. I've been asked to write a memory of my favourite Thanksgiving dish. After racking my brain, and seeking the deepest folds of my memory, I have it recalled: Wendell's butternut squash soup.

The year was 2001. I was thirteen years old. I was visiting the home of a family friend, my father's longtime confidant Wendell Smith. Wendell met my father in the 1970s in Cambridge Massachusetts. The story goes that Wendell hit on my father's then-girlfriend Kitty, and she said, "I have a boyfriend," and that boyfriend was my father. Fast forward a few years later, and Wendell was the best man at my father's wedding to my mother. My mother's name is Lisa, not Kitty.

Fast forward a few more years and there I am at the Thanksgiving table. Wendell has a number of children. One of these children was a girl named Emily. Emily was a few years older than me, and everything I was looking for in a woman: alive, willing to talk to me, and developed. Actually she was more than that - she was funny, confident, a bit of a black sheep, and sporting an excellent mop of red curly hair. I was desperately in love with her, and it was a love that can only be formed in childhood: pure, soulful, deep and embarrassing.

Ben, age eighteen

I sat at the table transfixed with her - here was my childhood crush, glimpsed only in evanescent stints over the many years of our parents' friendship. I had a bowl of butternut squash soup placed in front of me. How could I think about soup in a time like this? I had a sexuality to burgeon. And yet custom dictated that I needed to raise my cutlery.

When I took the spoon to my lips, I was apprehensive. I don't think I had ever heard of a butternut squash. I am certain I had never tasted one. The soup was incredibly clear and brothy. The colour was a pale burnt orange, perhaps umber. There were hues of brown, but it was delicate. Delicate like Emily. Delicate like my little heart.

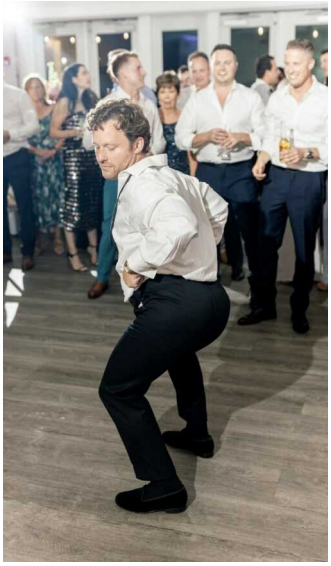
The taste was subtle and sweet. It had notes of cinnamon, and the sweetness of the squash was likely buttressed by some good honey. There were wispy sprigs of garden thyme. Despite my youthful palate, I was pleased.

I actually found out years later that Emily made out with my older brother Ben that same Thanksgiving while I was being excluded for being too young. I guess for her, Ben was the slightly-older, family-friend crush in her life. This was obviously devastating to me, as I had always felt she and I had something truly special between us. I guess it turns out I didn't know anything about love.

I have since tried to discover or recreate this soup from my memory. Every time I try, I end up with the thick, meaty soup that is the quintessential butternut squash soup one might find at M&S. I have been so perplexed by this consistency inconsistency that I have come to consider that maybe it wasn't a butternut squash soup at all. Perhaps it was some other soup. I will never know. Just as I will never know the pleasure of making out with Emily.

Happy Thanksgiving!

Daniel Metz



Daniel, now fully grown

What a Day for a White Wedding: Melanie and Nigel Get Hitched

Our wedding day came and went in the blink of an eye, but we know that the memories of laughter, love and happiness will last a lifetime.

We are Nigel and Melanie, the newly wed Mr and Mrs Nicholls.

After meeting just over two years ago our lives have changed considerably – from becoming engaged last November in the Peak District (I had already bought the wedding dress unbeknown to Nigel!) - to moving into Ufford Place in January of this year.

In the background, work was underway to organise a truly fabulous wedding at the beautiful St Mary of the Assumption church on 1st November. Father Paul married us in front of our family, friends and neighbours and the laughter began early as Nigel and I danced our way out of the church to the sound of the Bee Gees!

The celebrations continued at The Duck, Campsea Ash with a few traditional speeches, fantastic food and lots of questionable dancing!

Our three little flower girls, ring bearer and maid of honour did us proud on the day and on into the evening too.

So, after many months of being my own wedding planner, it's time to relax and go back to the Peak District for our honeymoon. We can't wait to see the photos our close friend (and amazing wedding photographer) took of our day.

Ufford is such a special village, and we feel very privileged to live here. We have exciting times ahead with more home renovations on the way, plus our first Christmas in our own home together and planning a 'big' birthday next year (once an event planner, always one).

Thank you to everyone who has wished us well and worked behind the scenes to make our day truly special and the best of our lives.

Mr and Mrs Nicholls

Do They Know It's Christmas Time in Tokyo? Not Really

Over Christmas 2023, Stefan and Neena Atkinson - and daughters Kate and Nell - turned their back on a traditional Ufford winter festive celebration to jet nearly 6,000 miles to visit their son William in Tokyo, Japan. In the November edition of the PUNCH, we heard about William's wonderful adventures. In this December issue, William and Stefan recall their slightly bewildering experiences of a very different Christmas Day.

William, 24, remembers:

As the winter festivities fall upon us, we often look back at times of yester-yule: where we have been and with who, but perhaps also where we have not, and why.

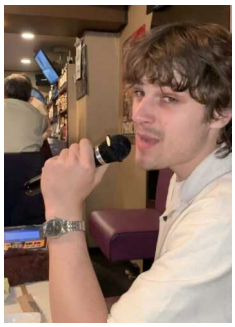
I'm sure that at least once in your lives you've asked yourselves: 'I do ever so wonder how the Christmas period manifests itself in a distant culture so heavily steeped in its own tradition, yet unavoidably altered by the heavy-hand of western globalisation, like say, Japan?' And of course, I couldn't blame you - we've all thought it!

Will, Stefan, Kate and Neena

Well, I'm here to say that as far as Christmas cheer goes, we have them running. A Japanese Christmas is closer to Valentine's Day than it is to anything else, with couples spending the evening walking down fairy-lit streets and imbibing in the traditional fare - a cold beer and a bowl of ramen.

If you're lucky, you might see a gaggle of drunk salarymen dressed as Santa, but the run-up to Christmas is overall lacking in festivities, beside a change in fast-food advertisements.

And so, before the family descended, I took it upon myself as Yule-Ambassador to bring a British Christmas to the people of Kyoto (or my friends at least). I cooked up a feast of Biblical-proportions, with stuffing, roasties, gravy, the lot - even wowing them with a flaming Christmas pud. And folks, they absolutely loved it.



The Karaoke Kid

With the masses pleased, I wished them a 'Meri Kurisumasu' (Yes, it's the same) and headed to Tokyo for a rather untraditional Christmas with the family. And despite its unorthodoxy, I still had a fantastic time. Because as we all know, Christmas is about the people you're with, not the noodles you eat.

Stefan, 55, remembers:

On the Run: Stefan Leads the Family In Their Hunt for a Cocktail

There won't be snow in Tokyo this Christmas - the only gift they got last year was us! We arrived on Christmas Eve, hugged William eight months after waving him off and headed to Kichijoji - part of Tokyo containing a warren of bars, shops and restaurants.

William picked one for lunch where ramen and tears were on the menu - Nell being exhausted after 18th birthday celebrations and a wholly sleepless journey. On Christmas morning after plenty of rest, we brought mini-stockings for the kids (aged 18, 24 and 24!). They were still in their hotel nightshirts looking like inmates from a Victorian asylum.

After prezzies, we strode out to meet Christmas Day in Japan. And dear readers - it looked like just another day to the locals. So we headed to a park for coffee and doughnuts, then wandered around some excellent vintage clothes stores. Purchases: one purple chunky knit roll neck (for me); one pair of lilac baggy trousers (for her). Happy Christmas darling x.

The Clan Turning Japanese for Christmas Day

We took the train to visit a temple downtown and had a good lunch in a small plates diner. Over the whole day we saw just one six-inch Christmas tree in a shopfront and no KFC at all [Ed.Note: it's tradition amongst many in Japan to eat KFC on Christmas Day]. Though we did have chicken for Christmas Dinner - in a yakitori restaurant. These are 'beak to tail' joints: we enjoyed chicken heart skewers, a crispy skin platter, a complete absence of sprouts - all washed down with white wine. Nice! What next? Cocktails - a library-styled place with glacial service and Martinis tasting like petrol.

Seeking an urgent palate cleanser, we found a tiny karaoke bar and finished the night wassailing before a drunk businessman sang us homeward with "Last Christmas". Do they know it's Christmas time at all? The answer is an equivocal 'not really'! Turns out that's quite refreshing.

Photos by the Atkinsons

Halloween Chills, Thrills, and Pumpkin Pie at the White Lion

The scariest night of the year at the White Lion lived up to its billing with a spook-tacular children's pumpkin carving competition.

A crowd of 35 mums, dads, grandparents and even children sculptured a fine selection of Halloween pumpkin lanterns.

A very close contest was won by a young lady called Bronwyn, who was on holiday from Wales.

Kit Thomas, who took our pictures on 31st October, said: "It was a great atmosphere."

Pub frontman Andy Jarrett dressed up as a witches' "hag", complete with a long black cape.

Kit added: "It was absolutely terrifying - and even worse when he put the ugly mask on."

The pub served lasagne and a dessert of Pumpkin Pie for just £15.

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White Lion Fireworks Spectacular Goes with Its Best Ever Bang

They came from near and far to enjoy one of the biggest and best White Lion firework displays on Tuesday 5th November. The annual spectacle attracted more than 750 adults and children to one of Suffolk's great private firework experiences.

The night went with the usual bang with the hungry crowd also managing to eat all the pub grub in just two hours. Chef Finn Boorne said they served 500 buns of either pulled pork with applesauce or burgers between 6pm and 8pm. "It was really busy," Finn, 21, said: "It was a very good night and everything went extremely well." Finn prepped the pork on Monday - which took 12 hours to cook - and worked with Andy Jarrett and Kit Thomas on Tuesday.

At least 14 staff, helped by an army of volunteers, kept the food and booze flowing and collected £2,500 in donations. Pub owner Stephen Thurlow said: "This was one of the biggest firework spectacles ever at the pub - and I've been doing it for 30-years."

The generous donations will go towards an even bigger Guy Fawkes' display in 2025.

Rilla Forge, Volunteer

Cheers! Pub Staff: Kit Thomas, Alex Murray and Finn Bourne

The bonfire - built in the main from wood donated by Foskett Farm - was lit by volunteer Tony Slattery. The fireworks erupted at 7.45pm and lit up the Ufford sky for a glorious 25-minutes. For many, it was then back to the bars, with a total of over 700 pints and 121 glasses of wine being consumed.

Here's to next year.

Andy Gardner

Photos by Kit Thomas

Bonfire Night: Diary of a Volunteer "Showboater."

Alex Briggenshaw, 53, has spent two decades as a key member of the Bonfire Night team behind the White Lion pub's annual Guy Fawkes' display. He explains what goes into making November 5th go with a bang.

A former Ufford resident and great friend John Reader called me up the day before Bonfire Night and said "We need some help with the fireworks tomorrow night, are you free?". That was twenty years ago and since then, bar the COVID break, I've never missed a night.

The date seems to be etched in the diary and as soon as September rolls by, the conversations between the members of the trusted firework team begin.

Back in the early days Malcolm Sneath, Sooty (Phillip Hawes) and Chris Norman would be responsible for everything associated with the lighting of the fire. Us mere mortals on firework duty would be party to the higher officers' sermon about how the fire would be lit, the ignition points and of course the Masters' Special Brew: a concoction of Fopp D'Hane's engine oil, Sooty's aftershave and Chris's homebrew!

The three would carry out a ritual prior to lighting, something similar to a scene from the iconic British folk horror film *The Wicker Man*, before igniting the master stick and eventually the fire would start. Nothing has really changed in twenty years, although White Lion regular Tony Slattery has joined the elite Masters .... and the time of lighting still remains a mystery!

Then there's the 'Showboaters' as the Masters call us. We have the job of lighting the rockets and the cases of explosives in the right sequence. Our event day usually starts with sorting the fireworks out into launch batches, digging the holes for the ground works and every few years climbing the trees to cut back any overhung branches.

The safety fences are put up and a clear path trodden from the launch area to the bar. It's important to be able to get to the bar. As the afternoon moves into early evening the Hi-Viz vests come out, safety goggles, gloves, hard hats and we talk through the lighting routine, which hasn't changed for almost two decades.

I am responsible for lighting the ground mortars, which include the exotically named Buffalo Stampede and UFO Catcher. We have four rows of five ground mortars which are set off from left to right. These are refilled during the fifteen minute display and are often accompanied by a volley of rockets, which is the responsibility of Stephen Thurlow and Paul Rust. We use phosphorus sticks to light the explosives, which are held by other volunteers. We use our experience to know when to start a sequence and there is no computer help in making the display work.

The smoke, heat and the concentration means that the firework team never sees the results of their efforts. It's intense work but the time flies past and it all ends with the shout of "last one" and then we step back and await the cheer.

Paul Rust and Alex Briggenshaw

NATURE NOTES by Christopher Reading

christopher.reading@icloud.com

ROBIN REDBREAST

Photo by John Richardson

The North Wind shall blow, and we shall have snow, and what will the robin do then, poor thing? He'll sit in a barn, and keep himself warm, and hide his head under his wing, poor thing!

I sometimes have difficulty choosing the focus of these little essays. But for the December issue, there can only be one bird: the chirpy little brown job that adorns many a card and Christmas tree. Resident throughout the year, it is the UK's favourite bird and certainly the easiest to recognise, with its bobbing flight and distinctive red breast.

Male and female adult birds are identical to the naked eye. Juveniles do not have a red breast but are dappled with golden brown spots.

Despite their cute appearance, robins are fiercely territorial and quick to drive away intruders. They feed on worms, seeds, fruits, insects and other invertebrates. Their song is joyous: a series of chirps and warbles, surprisingly loud for such a small bird.

I hope the sight and sound of this plucky little bird gives you comfort and joy during the festive season.

Nature Knowledge – The tradition of kissing under a sprig of mistletoe pre-dates Christianity and is linked to the plant being regarded as a symbol of fertility. In Norse mythology, an arrow made from mistletoe killed the god Baldur the Beautiful. In Greek myth, it allowed the hero Aeneas to visit his father in the abode of the dead. Mistletoe is a parasite and relies on the host tree for its nutrients. It favours lime, poplar and hawthorn – and is especially fond of apple trees. While toxic to humans, birds such as mistle thrush and black caps eat the berries as a source of food during the winter. It also plays a vital role in the life cycle of the aptly named mistletoe marble moth.

A Documentary Film Inspired by Ufford's Peter Cochrane Gets a UK Premier.

Peter and Jane *en route* to Leeds

Peter Cochrane was the guest of honour at the Leeds Film Festival on 4th November for the UK premier of a documentary named after his ground-breaking lecture "**How to Build a Truth Engine**." Peter, 78 and wife Jane, 66, travelled to the renowned festival as guests of director Friedrich Moser, who is behind the timely investigation into how to "safeguard factual information in a post-truth era."

Peter's commentary overlays the powerful opening sequence of the documentary during which he cites types of warfare - sea and air for example - but goes on to state "the most devastating of all is the information warfare." He warns: "Because if we lose the grip of the truth, we lose our civilization." Peter was approached by Friedrich Moser for advice and permission to use the title for the documentary. Actor and director George Clooney was the executive director. Peter said: "Trying to solve significant problems in this complex world gets ever harder."

Simply, a Truth Engine uses a complex algorithm - a process or set of rules - on masses of data to come up with a "probability of truth" rating on a subject or person.

Peter, of East Lane, Ufford, is currently a professor, technology and business advisor to companies and governments. During a long career with BT, he was behind many of its world transforming innovations.

An exclusive interview with Peter will appear in the January edition of the PUNCH.

Andy Gardner

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John Mann Introduces His Friend Alessandro di Mariano di Vanni Filipepi

Birth of Venus by Sandro Botticelli
Courtesy of the Uffizi Gallery, Florence

On 7th November the Ufford Art History Group was entertained with an illustrated presentation by their Chairman (and Ufford resident), John Mann.

John took us through the life of Alessandro di Mariano di Vanni Filipepi, better known as Sandro Botticelli. Born in the Republic of Florence in 1445, he lived and worked there until his death in 1510. Most important, Florence at the time was the cradle of the Renaissance. John expertly explained how the wealthy Florence Vespucci family introduced Botticelli to the powerful Medici family, who were significant art patrons. They commissioned work by Botticelli, da Vinci and Michelangelo. He also explained the family influence and many intrigues, including the deceased Simonetta Vespucci as the model for Venus. The four Botticelli paintings were wedding gifts and therefore contain symbols of love and fertility. Botticelli's love for the dead Simonetta?

Formerly, nudity in art was confined to biblical subjects. Botticelli was the first to use it for Renaissance subjects from Greek and Roman mythology. His Birth of Venus, above, is a well-known example. John took us through the details used by Botticelli to express symbolically the stories and beliefs behind his artwork. Because much of Botticelli's work was commissioned, it remained in the palaces of his patrons. As a consequence he and his work were not properly recognised until two centuries later.

It was a very stimulating afternoon, expertly lead by a knowledgeable guide. The UAHG completed the event with their usual glass of bubbly and cake, while attendees could discuss the afternoon's revelations.

Edward Creswick

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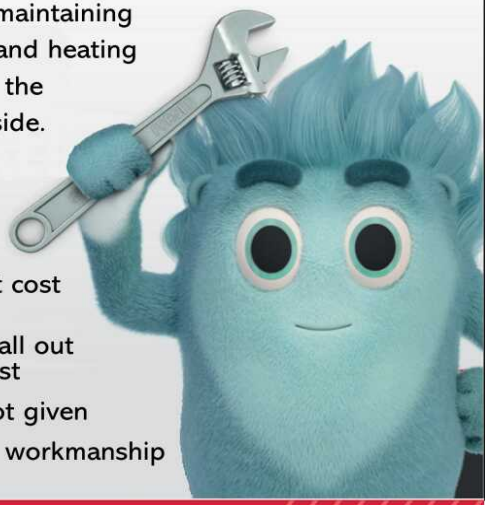

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UFFORD DIARY DATES FOR DECEMBER

EVENTS

5th December	Ufford Art History Group - Christmas Lunch at Hintlesham Hall	
8th December	Carol Service at St. Mary's Church 6.30pm	
9th December	Friends of Parklands Wood - Working Party 9.00am	UCH
10th December	White Lion Quiz Night - Food from 7.00pm, Quiz at 8.00pm	
11th December	Ufford Coffee Morning 10.00am to 12.00 noon	UCH
15th December	Suffolk Tractor Light Parade (timing to be confirmed on PUNCHLine)	
17th December	Ufford Parish Council - Meeting 7.00pm	UCH
17th December	White Lion Christmas Quiz Night - Food from 7.00pm, Quiz at 8.00pm	
18th December	White Lion Open Mic Night 7.00pm	
22nd December	Christmas Carols at the Ufford Crown 6.30pm	
24th December	Crib & Christingle Service at St. Mary's Church 2.30pm	
1st January	Treasure Hunt starting from the White Lion at 10.30am	

CLASSES AND CLUBS

*****Please check that activities are taking place over the Christmas period before attending*****

Tai Chi Classes	Mondays at 2.15pm	UCH
Tennis Club	Mondays and Fridays from 5.00pm	UCH
Carpet Bowls	Tuesdays at 2.00pm	UCH
Crocodile Rock	Tuesdays 9.45am-10.45am and 11.15am-12.00 noon	UCH
Ufford Bell Ringers	Tuesdays 7.30pm-9.00pm	
Happy Babies	Thursdays 9.30am-10.30am and 11am-12 noon	UCH

BRIDGE CLUBS

Ufford Friendly Bridge Club
Mondays 6.30pm **UCH**

U2 Bridge Club
Wednesday 4th December - 1.45pm **UCH**

WHERE?

SMPH **St Mary's Parish Hall**

UCH **Ufford Community Hall**

The PUNCH Directory

Schedule of events and classes are on the diary dates above

Boules (by tennis court - UCH)
Di Fulcher 01394 460551

Bridge Classes
Mike Fisher
www.mikefisherbridge.com

Carpet Bowls
Di Fulcher 01394 460551

Community Hall
bookings.uch@gmail.com

Crocodile Rock
crocodilerock.music@gmail.com

Cycle Club
Stephen Thurlow 01394 460770

Deben Probus Club
John Hickling 01728 746322
johnhickling@uwclub.net

Friends of Parklands Wood
Mike Hawthorne 01394 420241

Happy Babies
hello@happy-babies.co.uk

Helping Ufford Group (HUG)
Hotline: 07595 970139
helpinguffordgroup@gmail.com

Parish Council & website
Clerk: Judi Hallett
01394 411405 / 07739 411927
www.ufford.suffolk.cloud

Parish Church Committee
Karen Eyres 01394 460455
k.eyres@btopenworld.com

PUNCHLine
Tig Thomas 07710 882559
PUNCHline@uffordpunch.org.uk

St Mary's Parish Hall
Karen Eyres 01394 460455
k.eyres@btopenworld.com

Tennis Club
Chris Cage 01394 461082

U2 Bridge Club
Adrian Smith 01394 461179

Ufford Art History Group
Jenny Searle 01394 460317

Ufford Arts Festival
Jeremy Eyres 07739 330398

Ufford Basketball Club
Daniel Metz
uffordbasketball@gmail.com

Ufford Bell Ringers
Kate Eagle 07765 252515
Kate.eagle1@gmail.com

Ufford Friendly Bridge Club
Lyn Taylor 01394 460253

Ufford Gardening Club
Sheila Creswick 01394 547658
sheila@creswick.uk
www.uffordgardeningclub.org.uk

Ufford Players Theatre
Jackie Wilks 01423 333167

Ufford Tai-Chi
Ray Norris 01394 383076
www.suffolktaichiacademy.uk

Ufford PUNCH
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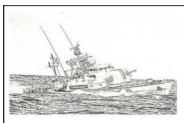

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www.honeysucklehorticulture.co.uk

December in the Garden

Chill December brings the sleet,
Blazing fire, and Christmas treat.

Sara Coleridge

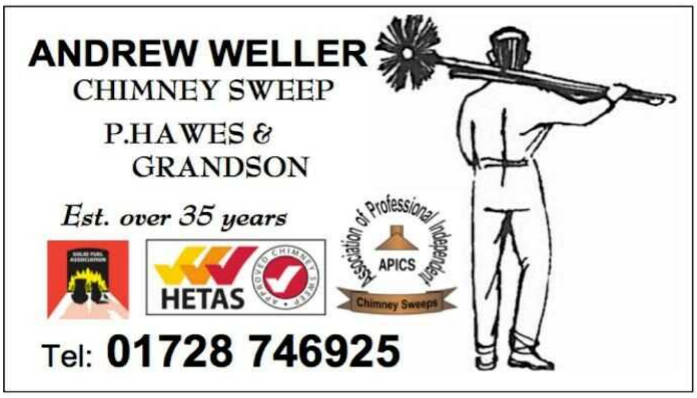
This month marks my last monthly musings for the Punch. Training to be a teacher at this ripe old age has brought with it unexpected time constraints. I will however be contributing on a quarterly basis in the New Year - front line diaries from an agricultural college, or similar! Thanks so much for reading this far - I look forward to being reacquainted soon.

Jobs for the Ornamental Garden

- Finish planting tulips if you've not already done so. Now really is your last chance.
- Start to winter-prune wisteria, cutting back whippy summer side-shoots to 2 or 3 buds to encourage flowering next spring.
- Prune grape vines trimming side shoots down to 2 buds from the main stem.
- Prune Japanese maples now to avoid sap bleed.
- Keep on top of the weeds, especially during mild spells.
- If any of your rose bushes suffered from black-spot or rust during the summer, gather up and remove any fallen leaves still on the ground to reduce the chance of spreading the infection next year.
- Clean and sharpen tools in readiness for the springtime rush.
- Harvest holly with berries for making Christmas garlands and wreaths. Stand the berry covered twigs in a bucket of water until you're ready to use them.
- Grass will continue to grow in mild spells - if you must mow, be sure to raise the blade to prevent damage to the lawn.
- Keep an eye on container plants as they may dry out quickly after frosts.
- Evergreen shrubs and bare root trees can be planted so long as the ground is not frozen.

Jobs for the Kitchen Garden

- Sow parsley, chives and basil on your kitchen windowsill for winter harvests.
- Continue to remove yellowing leaves from brassica plants to avoid fungal diseases.
- Lift the last leeks and parsnips before the soil becomes frozen, and heel them into a trench beside a convenient path. They'll keep for several months like this and can be easily brought indoors when required.
- Stake Brussel sprout plants to prevent them toppling over in strong winds.
- Lift and divide established clumps of rhubarb to renew the plant's vigour. Sections taken from the outside of the plant are better than those from the centre.
- Continue digging over vacant beds, else if operating a no dig system continue to mulch with well-rotted compost provided the soil is not frozen.
- Prune established currant, gooseberry and blackberry bushes.
- Check stored fruit and vegetables for any signs of rot to prevent it affecting the whole crop.
- Dig a trench for next year's beans, fill it with compostable kitchen waste (not cooked food) and re-cover with soil. This will rot down and dramatically improve the growing conditions.
- Remove the netting on the top of fruit cages to prevent damage from heavy snow.
- Feel very proud of yourself as you harvest your Christmas dinner. You may have carrots, parsnips, kale, red and green cabbage, Brussel sprouts, leeks and new potatoes.



Ufford's Perfect Christmas Day (according to AI)

How to make the best of Ufford on Christmas Day is one of the key challenges facing every village resident. There are so many competing opportunities that it often feels daunting. What you need is a little help. Here at the PUNCH we've employed the latest technology to take away the anxiety of what to do. A resident asked a simple question of their AI - artificial intelligence - software. The results are, well..... daunting.

We typed in: ***Describe a perfect Christmas day in the Suffolk village of Ufford, in about 350 words*.**

A perfect Christmas day in the picturesque Suffolk village of Ufford would be a serene and enchanting experience, blending traditional festivities with the village's unique charm.

Morning: The day would begin with the soft glow of the winter sun rising over the frosty fields, casting a magical light on the historic **St. Mary's Church**. The church bells would ring out, calling villagers to the Christmas morning service. The church, adorned with holly and ivy, would be filled with the harmonious sounds of carols, creating a warm and welcoming atmosphere.

Midday: After the service, families would take a leisurely stroll through the village, greeting neighbours and exchanging festive wishes. The **Ufford Crown***, the local pub, would be a hub of activity, offering a special Christmas menu featuring locally sourced produce. The aroma of roasting turkey and baking mince pies would waft through the air, inviting everyone to enjoy a hearty meal.

Afternoon: The village green would be a scene of joy and laughter as children play with their new toys and build snowmen, while adults engage in friendly conversation, perhaps with a cup of mulled wine or hot cider in hand. The sound of laughter and the sight of rosy-cheeked children would add to the festive spirit.

AI-generated Christmas Scene of Ufford

Evening: As the day turns to dusk, the village would be illuminated by the soft glow of Christmas lights adorning the thatched cottages. Families would gather around their fireplaces, the scent of pine from the Christmas tree mingling with the warmth of the fire. The evening would be spent playing board games, watching classic Christmas films, or reading stories by the fire.

Night: The perfect Christmas day would end with a sense of peace and contentment. The village would fall silent, with only the occasional hoot of an owl or the distant sound of a fox's bark breaking the tranquillity. The stars would shine brightly in the clear winter sky, and Ufford would sleep, nestled in the heart of the Suffolk countryside, dreaming of the day's happy moments.

* [Ed.Note: White Lion Pub also welcoming!]

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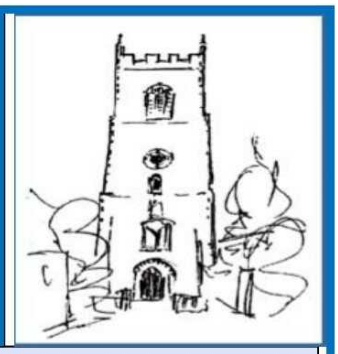
Church Wardens of Ufford: Karen Eyres T: 01394 460455
David Perfect T: 01394 460363



The Church of England's Advent and Christmas themed reflections for 2024 is entitled Calm and Bright and it sparked off some reflections of my own. Is all calm? December can feel frantic and busy and, for many, our attention is turned to Christmas: buying presents; is there going to be enough food to feed the family; will the turkey be big enough and who is collecting Great Aunt Mary for Christmas lunch. Often by the time Christmas Day arrives one can be ready to collapse.

In a world of uncertainty being calm isn't always easy, being calm in the midst of war, violence and oppression isn't 'calm'.

Advent is a time of waiting, a time of anticipation, perhaps something that we're not good at in the modern world. 'Why wait' when you can have it now?! Modern and fast communication means that we don't have to wait for things as long as we used to, email and text messaging is instant; news and current affairs are published on social media before there's time to breathe.

So, my suggestion is the Pause, the Calm. I invite each of you to take time this Advent and Christmas to take time each day just to pause and give yourself time to breathe, to just let things be and, if you believe in God, to let him speak to you of his love and mercy for you and for all people. If you don't believe in God, then be attentive to love and let yourself just be in The Calm.

If we pause and allow time for reflection, we will find God in the silence. As we approach this most Holy 'Silent' night when God sent Jesus, his only Son, to live among us and show his love for all people, may we all know the brightness of the love of Christ.

May the light of Christ born as one of us shine in us and through us this Christmas and always.

Wishing you all a blessed and Happy Christmas!

Fr. Paul

Worship at Ufford & Melton

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Sun 1st Advent 1

08.00 am Holy Communion BCP at Melton
10.00 am Parish Eucharist at Ufford
10.00 Morning Worship at Melton

Sun 8th Advent 2

08.00 am Holy Communion BCP at Ufford
10.00 Eucharist at Melton
6.30pm Carol Service at Ufford

Sun 15th Advent 3

08.00 am Holy Communion BCP at Melton
10.00 am Benefice Parish Eucharist at Ufford
6.30 pm Carol Service at Melton

Sun 22nd Advent 4

08.00 am Holy Communion BCP at Ufford
10.00 am Eucharist at Melton

Tues 24th Christmas Eve

2.30 pm Crib & Christingle Service at Ufford
4.30 pm Crib & Christingle Service at **Melton**
5.45 pm Said Communion for Christmas at **Melton**
11.30 pm Benefice Midnight Mass at **Melton**

Wed 25th Christmas Day

10.00 am Benefice Sung Eucharist for Christmas at **Ufford**

Sun 29th Christmas 1

10.00 Benefice Eucharist at **Melton**

LIVE CHURCH CALENDAR

www.uffordchurch.org

Food Bank - donations welcome to the 'Little Pantry 'at St Andrew's Church, Melton and Collection Box at Ufford Church.

Thank you. **Jenny Searle**

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Online prayer resources:

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https://www.churchofengland.org/prayer-and-worship/join-us-service-daily-prayer

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SANTA'S WORD SCRAMBLE

Oh no! Santa has mixed up the words on each of his gifts. Can you unscramble them and draw a line linking them to the picture on the page?

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detdy

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